

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 ( ISO ) W  
----- 036644

O R 041815Z MAR 76  
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8482  
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
AMEMBASSY RABAT  
AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 05 PARIS 06639

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (LINE 1 OF TEXT)

E. O. 11652: XGDS  
TAGS: PFOR, FR, XI, XF, US  
SUBJECT: ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON'S MEETING WITH  
FRENCH OFFICIALS

SUMMARY: DURING ONE AND A HALF-HOUR MEETING WITH QUAI  
OFFICIALS, ATHERTON DESCRIBED HIS VISIT TO THE MAGHREB,  
GAVE HIS IMPRESSIONS AND TENTATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE  
SITUATION IN THE SAHARA, AND DISCUSSED THE ARAB-  
ISRAELI SITUATION. WHILE THE FRENCH SHARE MUCH OF OUR  
OUTLOOK TOWARDS THE SAHARA, THEY APPEAR TO CONCUR  
PARTIALLY IN A YUGOSLAV ASSESSMENT THAT CREDITS  
BOUMEDIENE WITH A DETERMINATION TO OVERTHROW HASSAN  
AT ALL COSTS. THEY ARE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT SOVIET  
INVOLVEMENT AND FEEL THAT TIME IS ON ALGERIA'S SIDE.  
THEY THINK ACTIVE DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO FIND A FACE-  
SAVING SOLUTION MUST BE MADE DURING THE NEXT FEW  
MONTHS IF A CONFLICT IS TO BE AVOIDED. GIVEN FRANCE'S  
BAD RELATIONS WITH ALGERIA, THIRD PARTIES SHOULD BE  
BROUGHT INTO THE EFFORT. THE QUAI UNDERSTANDS THAT  
UNSYG WALDHEIM IS SENDING RYDBECK AGAIN TO ALGERIA,

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AND THINKS ARAB MEDIATION SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED. THE

FRENCH ARE WONDERING HOW TO REACT TO HASSAN'S EXPECTED ATTEMPTS TO SECURE RECOGNITION OF MOROCCO'S NEW INTERNATIONAL BORDERS.

1. FOLLOWING IS AN ACCOUNT OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON'S MEETING MARCH 4 WITH SECRETARY GENERAL DE COURCEL AND OTHER QUAI OFFICIALS INCLUDING DEPUTY POLITICAL DIRECTOR LEPRETTE, DIRECTOR FOR NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA CERLES, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR THE LEVANT SERVANT, AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR NORTH AFRICA D'ALBIS. AMBASSADORS ANDERSON AND PARKER, DCM AND EMBOFF ALSO PARTICIPATED.

2. AFTER COURCEL HAD WELCOMED THE VISITORS HE INQUIRED ABOUT ATHERTON'S VISIT TO THE MAGHREB. ATHERTON SAID HE WOULD DESCRIBE HOW HIS TRIP HAD COME ABOUT, GIVE HIS IMPRESSIONS, AND MAKE A TENTATIVE ASSESSMENT. THE TRIP HAD NOT BEEN IN ANY SENSE A "SAHARA" MISSION. FULFILLING A LONG STANDING ENGAGEMENT, UNDER SECRETARY ROBINSON WAS GOING TO ALGIERS TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC QUESTIONS. WHEN WE LEARNED THAT BOUMEDIENE WANTED BROADER DISCUSSIONS, SECRETARY KISSINGER DECIDED TO SEND ATHERTON ALONG, AND TO INCLUDE TUNISIA AND MOROCCO IN HIS ITINERARY.

3. ATHERTON SAID THAT IN EACH CAPITAL HE EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD NOT COME TO MEDIATE OR PROPOSE SOLUTIONS TO SAHARA DISPUTE. DISCUSSIONS INCLUDED BILATECAL MATTERS AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION, AS WELL AS THE SAHARA, AS PART OF PERIODIC CONSULTATIONS WE HOLD WITH MAGHREB GOVERNMENTS.

4. ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION, ATHERTON SAID BOUMEDIENE DID NOT INDICATE ANY CHANGE IN HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS U.S. PEACE EFFORTS, AND HE HAD DETECTED NO SIGN OF ANY MOVE ON BOKMEDIENE'S PART TOWARDS THE REJECTIONIST FRONT. HASSAN HAD BEEN VERY REALISTIC ABOUT THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST BUT, LIKE BOUMEDIENE, URGED THE NEED FOR EARLY MOVEMENT.

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5. ATHERTON SAID HE HAD EXPLAINED TO BOTH THAT WE ARE TRYING. THE RABIN VISIT TO WASHINGTON AND THE EXCHANGES WE PLAN TO HAVE THROUGH OUR AMBASSADORS IN DAMASCUS, CAIRO AND AMMAN ARE PART OF THAT EFFORT. EVERYONE HAD STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MAY EXPIRATION DATE IN THE GOLAN.

6. BUT BOTH HASSAN AND BOUMEDIENE WERE PREOCCUPIED

WITH THE SAHARA QUESTION, ATHERTON CONTINUED. HE HAD ASKED FOR THEIR ASSESSMENTS OF THE SITUATION AND EXPLAINED OUR POLICY. TO BOUMEDIENE, ATHERTON EMPHASIZED THAT U.S. POLICY IS NOT ANTI-ALGERIAN, AND THAT

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O R 041815Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8483

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AVNMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT 0657

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EXDIS

IN NO WAY WERE WE TRYING TO USE MOROCCO AGAINST HIM. WE HAD COUNSELED HASSAN AGAINST THE GREEN MARNGPY# HAD NOT BEEN A PARTY TO THE TRI-PARTITE AGREEMENT, AND DESIRE NEITHER TO MEDIATE NOR INJECT OURSELVES INTO THE PROBLEM. ATHERTON EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT BOUMEDIENE WOULD UNDERSTAND THAT WE HAVE A LONG RELATIONSHIP WITH MOROCCO, THAT WILL CONTINUE, AND THAT OUR MILITARY ASSISTANCE WILL GO ON, ALTHOUGH IT WILL NOT BE ESCALATED. ATHERTON HOPED THE ALGERIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD UNDERSTAND THIS AND THAT THE SAHARA WOULD NOT BECOME THE DOMINANT FACTOR IN US-ALGERIAN RELATIONS, AND THAT OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS COULD BE INSULATED FROM THE SAHARA PROBLEM.

7. IN MOROCCO, ATHERTON SAID HE TOLD HASSAN THAT THE US IS SYMPATHETIC AND WANTS TO CONTINUE ITS SUPPORT TO MOROCCO WITHOUT BEING DRAWN INTO THE DISPUTE. WE HOPE THE SAHARAN SITUATION WILL NOT BE INTERNATIONALIZED

AND CAN BE DEALT WITH IN ITS REGIONAL CONTEXT. A CONTINUATION OF THE TENSION WOULD ENDANGER MAGHREB STABILITY. WE HOPE MOROCCO WILL SEEK DIPLOMATIC ALTERNATIVES THAT WILL MEET AT LEAST IN PART THE SENSITIVITIES OF ALL PARTIES AND PROVIDE FACE-SAVING SOLUTIONS.

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8. ATHERTON SAID BOUMEDIENE IMPRESSED HIM AS BEING RESIGNED TO PROLONGED TENSION. BOUMEDIENE SAID THE PROBLEM SHOULD NOT BE SOLVED BY WAR. HE EMPHASIZED TIME AFTER TIME THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION. BOUMEDIENE HAD SHOWN NO SIGN OF ABANDONING HIS POSITION, AND INSISTED THAT THE PROBLEM WAS NOT SOLVED. THE MOROCCAN TAKE-OVER WAS ILLEGAL AND NOT INTERNATIONALLY LEGITIMIZED. BOUMEDIENE SAID HE WOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE SAHARA PEOPLE, REPRESENTED BY THE POLISARIO. ATHERTON HAD THE IMPRESSION BOUMEDIENE WAS DETERMINED, BUT NOT MILITANT; AND THAT HE FELT TIME WAS ON ALGERIA'S SIDE. BOUMEDIENE DID NOT ACT, HOWEVER, AS THOUGH HE HAD CLOSED ALL THE DOORS PERMANENTLY. PARKER NOTED THAT BOUMEDIENE HAD ALSO SAID HASSAN WAS THE LAST KING IN AFRICA. "HAILE SELASSIE FELL BECAUSE OF THE RIGIDITY OF THE SYSTEM; HISTORY IS NOT WITH MONARCHIES", BOUMEDIENE ASSERTED.

9. ATHERTON SAID HASSAN FEELS HIS POLICY HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL AND IS DETERMINED TO STAY ON COURSE. HASSAN ALSO WANTS TO AVOID HOSTILITIES. BUT HASSAN MADE A POTENTIALLY WORRISOME REMARK. HE SAID HE WOULD NOT PERMIT A LONG GUERRILLA WAR OF ATTRITION, AND THAT IF FIGHTING DRAGGED ONE, HE WOULD NOT HESITATE TO ATTACK THE BASES FROM WHICH IT CAME; HE WOULD RETAIN THE RIGHT TO ACT ACROSS THE BORDER. MORE HOPEFULLY, HASSAN DID SAY HE WAS LOOKING FOR A FORMULA FOR A DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION THAT WOULD SAVE BOUMEDIENE'S FACE, PROVIDED MOROCCO'S POSITION IN THE SAHARA WAS NOT QUESTIONED.

10. ATHERTON BELIEVED HASSAN THINKS HIS POSITION IS NOW BETTER THAN BOUMEDIENE'S, EVEN IN THE OAU. HASSAN IS ENCOURAGED BY THE CAUTIOUS SOVIET ATTITUDE, WHICH SEEMS TO WANT TO AVOID CHOOSING BETWEEN ALGERIA AND MOROCCO, ALTHOUGH HASSAN HAS NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE RESULT WERE THE SOVIETS FORCED TO MAKE A CHOICE. HASSAN SAID HE HOPED MOROCCO'S FRIENDS WOULD TRY TO PERSUADE OTHERS, INCLUDING THE RUSSIANS, NOT TO SUPPORT ALGERIA.

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11. IN LIGHT OF HIS VISIT, ATHERTON SAID HE DID NOT SEE THE ELEMENTS OF A SOLUTION NOW. THERE ARE FOUR DETERMINING FACTORS WHICH SHOULD BE CLOSELY WATCHED IN THE COMINQ MONTHS.

A. POLISARIO'S VIABILITY AND STAYING POWER, ESPECIALLY IN DESERT FIGHTING, AND THE DEGREE TO WHICH IT CONTINUES TO RECEIVE ALGERIAN SUPPORT.

B. WHETHER HASSAN CAN CONTINUE TO PLAY THE CLEVER DIPLOMATIC GAME AND PREVENT SUPPORT OF OTHERS FROM COALESCING AROUND ALGERIA'S POSITION.

C. WHETHER THE SOVIETS WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY THEIR BALANCING ACT.

D. WHETHER MAURITANIA WILL BE THE ACHILLES HEEL THROUGH WHICH BY SUBVERSION, POLITICAL PRESSURE OR

NOTE: 1ST PARA PARIS 6639 SECTION 2/5, AS RECEIVED.

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----- 128086

O R 041815Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8484

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

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EXDIS

GUERRILLA WARFARE ALGERIA MAY SUCCEED IN SEPARATING MAURITANIA FROM MOROCCO.

12. COURCEL ASKED OUR ESTIMATE OF THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE SOVIETS ARE HELPING TRANSFORM THE ALGERIAN PEOPLE'S ARMY INTO A MODERN, EFFECTIVE FIGHTING FORCE.

13. ATHERTON SAID THE SOVIETS WOULD PROBABLY CONTINUE SUPPLYING ARMS, BUT WE DO NOT KNOW HOW MUCH. PARKER SAID THE FRENCH HAVE ESTIMATES OF SOVIET SHIPMENTS PERHAPS LARGER THAN OUR OWN, BUT IN FACT, NO ONE REALLY KNOWS.

14. COURCEL SAID FRANCE CONTINUES TO WANT TO AVOID BECOMING INVOLVED. HE RECALLED THAT BOUMEDIENE HAD SAID HE DID NOT WANT LAND AND THE FRENCH THEN SAW AN AGREED ALGERIAN/MOROCCAN/MAURITANIAN POSITION AS POSSIBLE. SUBSEQUENTLY, FRENCH RELATIONS WITH ALGERIA DETERIORATED AND BOUMEDIENE SEEKS CONVINCED THAT THERE IS AN IMPERIALISTIC PLOT TO OVERTHROW HIM. THE FRENCH HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO REASSURE HIM. FRANCE, LIKE THE U.S., SUPPLIES SIGNIFICANT ARMS TO MOROCCO, BUT ALSO SELLS SMALL AMOUNTS TO ALGERIA, WHICH DEPENDS PRIMARILY ON THE SOVIETS. PLANNED FRENCH SHIPMENTS TO

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BOTH COUNTRIES WILL CONTINUE.

15. COURCEL SAID THE ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION GIVEN THEM TEN DAYS AGO BY YUGOSLAV DEPUTY SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS MOJSOV, BASED ON CONVERSATIONS WITH ALGERIAN MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND ENERGY ABDESELAM, IMPRESSES AND DISTURBS THE FRENCH. THE YUGOSLAVS BELIEVE THAT BOUMEDIENE WILL PUSH THE POLISARIO AS FAR AS HE CAN AND THAT HE WANTS TO OVERTHROW HASSAN. IF HE IS UNSUCCESSFUL AND ACHIEVES NO SATISFACTION TOWARDS SELF-DETERMINATION, BOUMEDIENE WILL LAUNCH AN ATTACK. THAT IS WHY THE ALGERIANS ARE BUYING MANY ARMS FROM THE USSR. TO YUGOSLAV WARNINGS THAT THEY WOULD LOSE THEIR INDEPENDENCE BY ACCEPTING SOVIET CREDITS FOR ARMS, THE ALGERIANS REPLIED THAT THEY PLANNED TO BUY THEM -- WITH LIBYAN AND OTHER HELP. THE YUGOSLAVS THINK THE SITUATION IS VERY DANGEROUS, SINCE NEITHER HASSAN NOR BOUMEDIENE CAN RETREAT BECAUSE OF INTERNAL PROBLEMS.

16. COURCEL CONCURRED IN THE DANGERS OF THE SITUATION AND SAID THE WEST SHOULD USE THE CURRENT PAUSE TO TRY TO PREVENT CONFLICT; IN SIX MONTHS, THERE MAY BE OPEN WARFARE. BECAUSE OF THE ALGERIAN CHARGES AGAINST THEM, THE FRENCH CANNOT DO MUCH. FRANCE (AND THE US) MAY HAVE TO WORK THROUGH OTHERS. COURCEL WONDERED WHETHER SOMETHING MIGHT BE DONE ON THE BASIS OF THE TWO UN RESOLUTIONS CALLING FOR SELF-DETERMINATION. HASSAN AT ONE POINT DID CALL FOR AN INTERNATIONALLY GUARANTEED SETTLEMENT.

17. ATHERTON SAID THAT WHILE PUBLICLY HASSAN SAYS THE PROBLEM IS SOLVED, IN PRIVATE, HE SAYS HE WILL CONTINUE TO LOOK FOR A DIPLOMATIC FACE-SAVING FORMULA FOR BOUMEDIENE. NONETHELESS, HAVING THE JEMAA VOTE FOR REUNIFICATION, AND THE DECLARATION OF THE SAHARAN REPUBLIC HAVE HARDENED BOTH SIDES.

18. COURCEL SAID HE DOUBTED THAT ARAB SUPPORT FOR HASSAN WILL LAST. REPORTS ABOUT THE RECENT OAU MEETING ARE NOT AS REASSURING AS HASSAN CLAIMS. HE THOUGHT

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THAT THE RADICAL STATES WOULD NOW BEGIN, ONE BY ONE, TO RECOGNIZE THE REPUBLIC. HASSAN'S THRASHING AROUND HAS HURT HIS POSITION WITH THE ARABS.

19. ATHERTON SAID HE HAS THE IMPRESSION HASSAN SUSPECTS HE WILL HAVE LONG-RUN PROBLEMS. HASSAN REFLECTED CONCERN FOR MAINTAINING BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT. HE MAY HAVE SECOND THOUGHTS. ATHERTON HAD MADE IT CLEAR TO HASSAN THAT IT IS UNREALISTIC TO PRETEND THAT THE MATTER WAS CLOSED. AT THE SAME TIME, HE HAD MADE IT CLEAR TO BOUMEDIENE THAT IT IS EQUALLY UNREALISTIC TO THINK HE COULD REVERSE THE MOROCCAN TAKE-OVER OR THAT HASSAN WOULD AGREE TO A UN REFERENDUM HELD AFTER MOROCCAN TROOP WITHDRAWAL. REPLYING TO A QUESTION, ATHERTON SAID HASSAN HAD NOT MENTIONED A MEETING OF ARAB STATES ON THE MATTER.

20. COURCEL SAID THE FRENCH UNDERSTAND THAT UNSYG WALDHEIM IS SENDING RYDBECK AGAIN TO ALGERIA AND HOPES

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O R 041815Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8485

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

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EXDIS

RYDBECK WILL GO ALSO TO MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA, BUT THAT HASSAN DOES NOT WANT TO RECEIVE HIM. WALDHEIM IS NOT HAPPY WITH HASSAN'S JEMAA PLOY. COURCEL SAID HE DID NOT AGREE WITH HASSAN'S CHARACTERIZATION OF SOVIETS AS BEING "CAUTIOUS", AT LEAST AS FAR AS ARMS ARE CONCERNED.

21. ATHERTON SAID OUR INTELLIGENCE DOES NOT SHOW THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE DELIVERED MUCH IN THE LAST TWO MONTHS. SOME ARMS HAVE COME FROM LIBYA, HOWEVER, AND PERHAPS THE SOVIETS ARE INVOLVED THERE. PARKER SAID SOVIET ASSISTANCE TO ALGERIA IS MORE CAUTIOUS THAN WERE ITS SHIPMENTS TO ANGOLA OR EGYPT. HE SAID WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION OF THE REPORT MENTIONED BY COURCEL OF A 5000-MAN ARMORED BRIGADE'S MOVING FROM LIBYA TO TINDOUF. THE LIBYAN MIRAGES HAVE LEFT ALGERIA, PARKER SAID, AND THE LIBYANS HAVE NO COMBAT PILOTS. ALGERIAN CAPACITY TO USE THE EQUIPMENT THEY ALREADY HAVE IN COMBAT IS ALSO LIMITED.

22. COURCEL REPEATED THE SCENARIO DESCRIBED BY THE YUGOSLAVS AND SAID IT MIGHT WELL OCCUR. HE SAID FRANCE HAS A LITTLE INFLUENCE WITH MOROCCO, BUT ALMOST NONE WITH ALGERIA.

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23. ATHERTON SAID HASSAN SEEMS MORE WORRIED BY ARMS FROM VIETNAM AND NORTH KOREA THAN FROM THE SOVIETS. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION CONFIRMING SUCH ARMS SO FAR, HOWEVER. AFTER AGREEING WITH ATHERTON, COURCEL ASKED ABOUT POLISARIO STRENGTH. USING SOME SPECULATIVE CALCULATION, PARKER SAID THERE MIGHT BE A MAXIMUM OF 5 - 6000 MEN, INCLUDING SAHARANS FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER.

24. COURCEL NOTED THE DANGERS THAT WOULD FLOW FROM THE CREATION OF TWO "PROGRESSIVE" REGIMES IN THE MAGHREB. ATHERTON THOUGHT WHATEVER GOVERNMENT WAS IN RABAT WOULD SUPPORT CURRENT SAHARA POLICY WHICH IS POPULAR WITH EVERYONE IN MOROCCO. HE NOTED THE GREAT PERSONAL ANIMOSITY BETWEEN BOUMEDIENE AND HASSAN. WE SHALL WATCH THE SITUATION CLOSELY BUT HAVE NO MAGIC FORMULA, HE SAID.

25. COURCEL SAID THE BEST TACTIC MIGHT BE TO ENCOURAGE THE ARABS TO MEDIATE BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE. ATHERTON SAID THE TUNISIANS HAD TRIED AND HAD ALMOST GIVEN UP. OTHER ARABS DO NOT SEEM ANY MORE SANGUINE.

26. TURNING TO THE MIDDLE EAST, CERLES ASKED ATHERTON'S OPINION ABOUT THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF SOME SORT OF FEDERATION AMONG SYRIA, LEBANON, JORDAN AND THE PALESTINIANS. ATHERTON SAID HE WAS SKEPTICAL. HE SAID THE SYRIAN-JORDAN MOVES WERE TACTICAL, AND THAT THE PLO SEEMS NOW TO BE WORRIED ABOUT SYRIAN INFLUENCE AND TRYING TO REPAIR RELATIONS WITH EGYPT.

27. COURCEL AGREED THAT FEDERATION SEEMS UNLIKELY AND ASKED IF WE PLAN ANY INITIATIVE BEFORE MAY. ATHERTON SAID WE WOULD LIKE TO DO SOMETHING, AND THE SOONER THE BETTER, BUT HAD REACHED NO CONCLUSIONS PENDING COMPLETION OF CURRENT ROUND OF CONSULTATIONS ABOUT WHAT MIGHT BE MOST PRACTICAL WAY TO PROCEED. WE TOLD RABIN THE SITUATION COULD NOT BE FROZEN AND URGED HIM

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W  
----- 128090

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8486

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

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EXDIS

TO TALK TO THE CABINET ABOUT WHAT WAS POSSIBLE. IN RESPONSE TO COURCEL'S QUERY, ATHERTON SAID WHILE NON-BELLIGERENCE WAS TOUCHED ON IN WASHINGTON, IT DID NOT REALLY COME OUT UNTIL AFTER THE ISRAELI CABINET DEBATE. RABIN TALKED ABOUT BEING WILLING TO NEGOTIATE WITH ANY COUNTRY. WE DO NOT KNOW PRECISELY WHAT RABIN HAS IN MIND SINCE HE DID NOT DESCRIBE IT IN DETAIL. RABIN DID MAKE CLEAR THAT HE IS NOT READY TO DEAL WITH THE PLO OR THE PALESTINIANS, AND THAT HE THINKS IT WOULD BE POLITICAL SUICIDE TO DO SO.

28. REPLYING TO A QUESTION, ATHERTON SAID WE STILL THINK A PRE-GENEVA CONFERENCE IS A GOOD IDEA TO FINESSE THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM BUT THE SUGGESTION HAS NOT TAKEN HOLD. THE CLOSER WE GET TO MAY, THE LESS LIKELY IT IS THAT THE ISRAELIS WILL BE FLEXIBLE SINCE THEY THINK TO DO SO UNDER PRESSURE OF UNDOF RENEWAL WOULD BE YIELDING TO BLACKMAIL.

29. RETURNING TO THE SAHARA, COURCEL ASKED HOW THE WEST SHOULD REACT TO HASSAN'S LIKELY EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE RECOGNITION OF HIS NEW BORDERS BY, FOR EXAMPLE, INVITING AMBASSADORS TO VISIT EL AYOUN. ATHERTON AGREED THAT THIS IS A QUESTION TO WHICH WE SHOULD

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ADDRESS OURSELVES.

30. THE MEETING CONCLUDED WITH MUTUAL EXPRESSIONS OF  
APPRECIATION AND THE DESIRE TO CONTINUE SUCH USEFUL  
EXCHANGES.

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## Message Attributes

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